

127. To calculate the rate per acre from the figures shown in the above statement is by no means a safe course to arrive at the exact rate of assessment charged by the Forest Department, inasmuch as they only exhibit the actual sums realised during the year, while under the terms of agreement executed by cultivators some of the later instalments due on the land let to cultivation in one year do not become payable till the next, and at times some of the revenue remains unadjusted when a year terminates. At the close of the year under report, such sums aggregated Rs. 1,187-7-2. In the year 1895-96. an item of Rs. 424, levied as assessment on "kharif" lands, had not been accounted for by the Divisional Forest Officer, Sukkur, and that year's figure has consequently been altered from Rs. 811 to Rs. 1,235.

III.—Free grants of Forest produce.

128. The usual table showing the money value of the free grants of timber and other forest produce made to agriculturists, cattle-owners living within forest limits, as well as the people of villages in the vicinity of Forest Reserves is given below for two years :—

Division.		1895-96.	1896-97.
		Rs.	Rs.
Sukkur	...	689	1,019
Naushahro	...	287	231
Hyderabad	...	403	197
Jerruck	...	32	85
Total	...	1,411	1,532

129. The figures in the above statement often vary with the vagaries of the river and the number of fires that break out in a year in villages. The larger the number of huts or houses washed away or burnt, the greater is the demand for forest material. It is satisfactory to note that the orders on the subject of free grants, quoted under paragraph 126 of last year's report, were well attended to, and necessary precautions were taken to prevent unnecessary delay to grantees in the cutting and removal of the material sanctioned in their favour.

130. There is yet another advantage which the coupe contract system of working has been the means of affording to Forest population, inasmuch as the coupe agreement provides that the contractor has no claim to the small materials consisting of branches, tooth brushes, shoots or wood of any sort five inches or less in girth at the thickest part, and that he is not to interfere with the villagers who may be permitted by a Forest Officer at any time after the commencement of felling to cut and remove the said small materials for firewood or fencing from the coupes. The area under exploitation being more or less evenly distributed, such material is available in sufficiently large quantities to meet the daily requirements of the people, and is allowed to be removed free of charge without requiring any preliminary formalities to be observed.

IV.—Produce removed by right-holders and under privileges.

131. The following statement compares the number of cattle which grazed free in the forests of this Circle as well as the value of grazing enjoyed by them:—

Division.	NUMBER OF CATTLE.		VALUE OF GRAZING.	
	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.
			Rs.	Rs.
Sukkur	18,268	16,264	25,360	21,327
Naushahro	8,266	8,329	3,276	3,850
Hyderabad	72	58	19	88
Jerruck	1,168	1,536	832	2,367
Total	27,774	26,187	29,487	27,632